



NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU

1411 JEFFERSON DAVIS HIGHWAY
ARLINGTON VA 22202-3231

NGB-J1-FP

4 May 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR STATE FAMILY PROGRAM DIRECTORS AND WING FAMILY PROGRAM COORDINATORS OF ALL STATES, GUAM, PUERTO RICO, THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, AND THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

SUBJECT: Family Readiness Program

1. References.

- a. DODI 1342.23, Family Readiness in the National Guard and Reserve Components
- b. Army Regulation 608-1, Army Community Service Program.
- c. Army Regulation 600-20, Army Command Policy.
- d. Air Force Instruction 36-3009, Family Support Center Program.
- e. National Guard Regulation 600-12, National Guard Family Programs.

2. The purpose of this guidance is to further define the policies provided in the above cited publications as they relate to the Family Readiness Program for both the Army and Air National Guard under the auspices of the National Guard Family Program. This guidance outlines the definition and components of the Family Readiness Program for Army and Air Guard Family Programs.

3. Family Readiness is the level of preparedness families and their Guard members have in preparation for that call to state or federal active duty.

4. Whether the Guard member is attending a military school, providing state or local disaster relief, or defending freedom in support of overseas contingency operations, Family Readiness provides the concentrated military support that is critical throughout the Guard member's absence.

5. The Family Readiness Program provides the information and resources that can help families become more self-reliant. With self-reliance and knowledge comes a feeling of increased self-confidence. This in turn leads to stronger individual and family well being. The Six Step process of Family Readiness includes: In Processing, Welcome Briefing, Training, Pre-deployment, Deployment and Reunion.

6. The Family Readiness Program uses a six step process to achieve the highest level possible. These six steps are: In Processing, Welcome Briefing, Training, Pre-deployment, Deployment and Reunion.

a. In Processing establishes the foundation for communication between the National Guard and the family member. This important first step of the process ensures that families who are new to the National Guard are able to receive information and assistance in a timely manner as well as become more acclimated within the military.

(1) Family Data Sheets completed by each incoming National Guardsman allows the unit, State Family Program Director or Wing Family Program Coordinator to send the family materials relevant to their unit and the National Guard as well as provides important contact information to keep the family informed about upcoming unit meetings and activities.

(2) Sponsors should also be appointed to the National Guard member and their family to allow for a smoother transition into the military.

b. Welcome Briefing is the second step in strengthening family readiness. The Welcome Briefing focuses on the relationship between the unit command, the Family Readiness Group/Key Volunteer, the family and the Guard member and identifies how they all work together to help the Guard Member accomplish the mission while assisting the family in dealing with the day to day concerns of being part of a guard family. A successful Welcome allows for an interaction between all parties and a chance for questions and answers. It provides an understanding of the unit mission. It puts a face on the National Guard Program and that unit. It is the goal of all involved to ensure that it is a knowledgeable, confident and caring face. A Welcome Briefing connects Guard Members and families with local community resources. An effective Welcome Briefing builds upon the Guard member and the family member's knowledge effectively laying a foundation for all future trainings. The Welcome Briefing provides the following:

(1) Unit Mission

(2) Family Program's Mission

(3) Available and applicable programs

(4) A liaison between the National Guard and the family

c. Training is an ongoing process that lays the foundation for each step of the Guard member's military career. The following programs will be used to provide a better understanding of military life and military expectations.

(1) NGB Training

(2) Army Family Team Building (AFTB)

(3) Key Volunteer Program

d. Pre-Deployment provides the opportunity of making sure that families have everything in order in case of deployment and to utilizing all of the training that the family and the Guard member have received. It is the time to ensure that families know and understand all of the responsibilities that may shift in case of deployment. Additionally, the Pre Deployment process is the best time to confirm that all documentation is correct and updated, such as,

(1) Family Care Plans

(2) Financial documents

(3) Any other additional documentation required

e. Deployment is the most stressful of the six step process. The Guardsman is deployed and the family may require assistance in dealing with this hectic and stressful time. For this reason, Family Assistance Specialists are located nationwide in order to better assist the families of deployed service members with issues and concerns that may arise during the deployment. Family Assistance Specialists are in operation twenty four hours per day and are able to provide assistance in the six essential areas:

(1) ID cards and Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) enrollment

(2) TRICARE and military medical benefits education

(3) Emergency Financial Services

(4) Legal Information & Referral

(5) Crisis Intervention and Referral


(6) Community Information and Referral

f. Reunion and Reintegration, the last step in the process, focuses on not only reuniting the Guard member and the family, but also of assisting the Guard member to transition more smoothly from the role of full time Guardsman back into their civilian role in the community. Reunion briefings help to alleviate the fear of the unknown while also helping families better understand the different feelings and concerns that they may encounter. These briefings also cover changes in TRICARE insurance, pay and the Guard member's reemployment rights. Marriage enrichment (Strong Bonds) courses are also offered to help strengthen the marital relationship and to offer additional

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assistance with any questions or concerns the family or the service member may still have.

7. Questions concerning this matter should be addressed to MAJ Greg Grabow, at (703) 607-5547, DSN 327-5547 or via email greg.grabow@us.army.mil.



M. ALEX BAIRD
Chief, Family Program Division

CF:
NGB-J1
NGB-J1-FP Staff
State Joint Force Headquarters, J1s
Wing, DPs